

esprit
03.04

les idées
fixes



orchestra

www.espritorchestra.com

alex pauk music director and conductor

saturday, january 31, 2004 8:00 pm

macmillan theatre, edward johnson building, 80 queen's park

esprit orchestra - Les Idées Fixes

Alex Pauk **music director & conductor**

violin 1

Fujiko Imajishi
Sonia Vizante-Bucsa
Michael Sproule
Corey Gemmell
Sandra Baron
Aisslinn Nosky

violin 2

Dominique LaPlante
Anne Armstrong
Ronald Mah
Louise Pauls
Nicole Zarry
Hiroko Kagawa

viola

Beverley Spotton
Angela Rudden
Rhyll Peel
Katharine Rapoport

cello

Paul Widner
Elaine Thompson
Maurizio Baccante
Marianne Pack

bass

Tom Hazlitt
Robert Speer

flute/picc

Douglas Stewart

flute/alto/picc

Maria Pelletier

oboe

Lesley Young

english horn

Karen Rotenberg

clarinet/E flat

Max Christie

bass clarinet

Richard Thomson

clarinet

Greg James

bass clarinet

Colleen Cook

bassoon

Jerry Robinson
William Cannaway

horn

Gary Pattison
Vincent Barbee

trumpet

Richard Sandals
Raymond Tizzard

trombone

Robert Ferguson
David Archer

tuba

Scott Irvine

harp

Sanya Eng

piano/celeste

Greg Millar

piano

Jeanie Chung

percussion

Trevor Tureski
Ryan Scott
Mark Duggan

soprano sax

John Johnson

alto sax

Vern Dorge

tenor sax

Phil Dwyer

baritone sax

Perry White

about esprit – Canada's new music orchestra

Now in its 21st concert season, Esprit Orchestra was formed in 1983 by Music Director/Conductor Alex Pauk to champion new music by Canadian Composers and bring new orchestral music to Canadians. Today, Esprit remains Canada's only full-sized orchestra devoted exclusively to current classical music. Each season, this innovative orchestra commissions, performs and promotes established, as well as emerging, Canadian composers in a 4 to 6 concert Subscription Series. Pauk and his Toronto-based orchestra of 45 highly-skilled members collaborate with Canada's most outstanding soloists and ensembles to bring audiences spine-tingling performances of Canada's most exhilarating new music. The orchestra further features Canadian premieres of music by leading International composers, such as Adams, Andriessen, Kagel, Kurtág, Ligeti, Penderecki, Schnittke, Takemitsu, van der Aa, among others. Esprit's concerts are often recorded for broadcast by CBC Radio Two's *Two New Hours*, making the orchestra's distinctive music available to musical patrons far and wide. Under Pauk's experienced baton, Esprit with CBC Records has produced a selection of the highest quality compact discs featuring the music of Canada's most venerated 20th Century composers.

Support Esprit's music-making and musicians. Your contribution directly benefits Canada's cultural heritage. To make a donation, call: 416-815-7887.

Upcoming esprit 2003/04 special events

***the weekend* – esprit's new wave composers festival**

In April 2004, Esprit Orchestra hosts its second ever *Weekend*, a unique festival that brings together the finest up-and-coming composers under one roof for two days of cutting-edge music and activities. *The Weekend*, New Wave Composers Festival, is your chance to discover and experience the music of Canada's rising star composers in one activity-packed weekend! **See Esprit's Web site at www.espritorchestra closer to the event for details.**

***in-your-space* – esprit orchestra community performances**

A special project backed by the Canada Council, *In-Your-Space* takes Esprit's musicians out of the concert halls and puts them into Toronto's public spaces. It's your rare chance to attend a mini-concert compliments of Esprit, sample new orchestral music, experience the Esprit Orchestra in non-typical formations and settings, and directly discuss the music and the orchestra's role in bringing it to the public. Where possible, composers will join Esprit's ensembles.

Call 416-815-7887 to discover how you can enjoy a complimentary *In-Your-Space* performance this season.

Be sure not to miss Esprit's next concert, ***Streamlined***, presented on **Saturday, April 3, 2004, at the St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts (pre-concert talk 7:15 p.m., concert 8:00 p.m.)** as part of Esprit's *Weekend*, New Wave Composers Festival. The music of rising star Canadian composers Rose Bolton, André Ristic, Christien Ledroit and Oliver Schneller will be presented at this concert. Also featured during *The Weekend* (April 2, 3, 4) will be educational events, orchestral readings, an-open-to-the-public discussion forum, and film/video screenings.



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esprit orchestra

Alex Pauk music director & conductor

Saturday, January 31, 2004

MacMillan Theatre, Edward Johnson Building, 80 Queen's Park, Toronto

Les Idées Fixes

Guest Soloist: Robert Aitken (Canada), flute

Guest Composers: Mauricio Kagel (Argentina/Germany); John Rea (Canada)

programme

7:15 p.m. – pre-concert composers' talk

8:00 p.m. – concert

Treppenmusik (staircase music) (1982)

for four string instruments, four clarinets,
four saxophones and tape delay system

John Rea (Canada)

Das Konzert (2001/2002)

for flute, harp, percussion & strings

* **North American Premiere**

Mauricio Kagel (Argentina/Germany)

intermission

Cantus in Memory of Benjamin Britten

(1977/1980) for string orchestra & bell

Arvo Pärt (Estonia)

Les Idées Fixes (1988/1989)

Rondo for Orchestra

* **Canadian Premiere**

Mauricio Kagel (Argentina/Germany)

The Strategic Initiatives Program of The George Cedric Metcalf Charitable Foundation has, over a three-year period, enabled the Esprit Orchestra to realize its goals in creating a comprehensive website (www.espritorchestra.com) and in producing electronic and multi-media projects. We wish to express deep gratitude to The Foundation for its generous support of Esprit's work in these new fields.

Esprit also receives generous support from: Scotiabank Group; Canada Council for the Arts; the Ontario Arts Council; CBC Radio Two's Two New Hours; The SOCAN Foundation; The Trillium Foundation; The Catherine and Maxwell Meighen Foundation; The Julie-Jiggs Foundation; The Vandewater Charitable Foundation; The George Lunan Foundation; Gaudeamus Foundation; Muziekgroep Nederland; The Royal Netherlands Embassy, Ottawa; The Consulate General of the Netherlands, Toronto; Roger D. Moore; Margery Griffith Bequest; The Vandewater Charitable Foundation; The Goethe-Institut, Toronto; Lufthansa.

Tonight's programme is subject to change without notice.



Alex Pauk, music director conductor

Alex Pauk is a prominent and influential conductor/composer on the Canadian music scene with a growing international profile. He is also a leading figure in the field of film music scoring, conducting and production.

In 1983, he founded Toronto's award-winning Esprit Orchestra and continues to develop Esprit as a concert organization and an orchestra involved with film, television, music theatre, visual arts, dance, CD and DVD recording and multimedia events.

Pauk has been engaged to write music for all the above-mentioned disciplines in addition to being commissioned to compose music for every type of musical ensemble. The scope of his film music, separate from concert music, covers a wide range of styles and genres (including arrangements of popular music). In 2002, he and his film-composing partner, his wife Alexina Louie, won the prestigious Louis Applebaum award for excellence in musical composition for a wide array of films.

In 1999, Alex Pauk made his debut European tour with Esprit Orchestra, conducting five Esprit Orchestra concerts in Holland (Gaudeamus International Music Week) and France. He has also organized three Canadian tours for Esprit.

Pauk often performs the Canadian premieres of works by leading international composers such as Kagel, Takemitsu, Ligeti, Berio, Adams, Penderecki and Lindberg and invites outstanding soloists such as Robert Aitken, Richard Stoltzman, Maurice Bourque, Richard Margison, Maureen Forrester, and Jon Kimura Parker to perform with Esprit.

In addition to the Esprit Orchestra, Pauk has conducted the Cologne Radio Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Vancouver Symphony, CBC Vancouver Radio Orchestra, Hamilton Philharmonic, Winnipeg Symphony, as well as smaller orchestras and ensembles throughout Canada.

The excellence of Pauk's work on compact discs has been recognized internationally on many occasions. For example, the Esprit CD *Music for Heaven and Earth* received a five-star rating (for performance and sound quality) in the BBC Music Magazine reviews (1996).

Pauk has been involved in a wide range of film productions including features, made-for-TV dramas, documentaries, docu-dramas, animations plus many performing arts films produced by Rhombus Media including; *Ravel's Brain*, *The Eternal Earth*, *The Radical Romantic*, *Ravel*, *For the Whales*, and *September Songs*, *The Music of Kurt Weill* (with Pauk and Esprit appearing on camera in several of these films).

In 1999, Pauk received the esteemed Musician of the Year award from The Toronto Musicians' Association. In 1986, he was nominated by the Actra Awards for best original television score for the National Film Board animation *Blackberry Subway Jam*. Prominent Canadian composers Harry Somers, Alexina Louie and Colin McPhee have all received awards or nominations for music written for, or recorded by, Mr. Pauk.

Pauk and his film music composing partner, Alexina Louie, were nominated for a Genie award for their original musical contributions to the soundtrack of Canadian director Don McKellar's award-winning film, *Last Night*.

In November 2001, Pauk conducted the world premiere for Esprit of his *Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra* with the Esprit Orchestra in Toronto. In April 2003, he premiered his newest work, *Touch Piece* for digital soundtrack and orchestra. Mr. Pauk most recently composed a work for flute and string quartet which, commissioned by New Music Concerts, was performed in Toronto in January, 2004, by Robert Aitken and The Quarteto Latino Americano.





John Rea, composer

John Rea's approach to the art of composition is characterized by a nondoctrinaire alternation between a poetics related to the projection of an acoustic geometry, and a poetics associated with the projection of narratives, even of a certain theatricality. Dialectical by nature (and by his volition), Rea gives privilege to the somewhat opposing notions of 'discourse' and of 'commentary.' He wishes to communicate and increase awareness, occasionally in a didactic manner. He is a professor at McGill University in Montreal.

When it comes to conveying the interiority of abstract musical architectonics through time, one refers to these works among others: *Hommage à Vasarely*, *Vanishing Points*, *Over Time*, and *Time and Again*, all for orchestra, *Objets Perdus*, a string quartet, *Les Raisons des forces mouvantes*, for flute and string quartet, *Treppenmusik*, for 12 players and tape-delay system, and the recent *Homme Papillon* (2002), for 27 players including the Disklavier piano.

Rea's art of construction, when it focuses on exteriority, manifests itself primarily in those compositions where an evocative text, argument, or title directs the listener's attention to an arrangement of images outside of music. This technique of reflection and self-reflection appears in: *Les Jours*, a ballet for large orchestra; *Las Meninas*, for piano solo; *Zefiro torna*, for orchestra; *Music, according to Aquinas*, for chamber choir; and several melodramas, *Offenes Lied*, *Alma & Oskar*, and the most recent, *Sacrée Landowska*, for an actress/harpsichordist and chamber ensemble. It also emerges in his re-orchestration for 21 players of Alban Berg's opera, *Wozzeck*.

This double notion of discourse/commentary also characterizes Rea's commitment to fostering cultural activity within certain Montreal organizations where he sits on artistic and editorial committees. It further defines his relationship to his pen, so to speak, for Rea gives lectures and publishes articles about new music.

Written by Ferdinand L. Niemantz, January, 2004

***Treppenmusik*, for four string instruments, four clarinets, four saxophones and tape delay system (1982)**

Note Written by John Rea

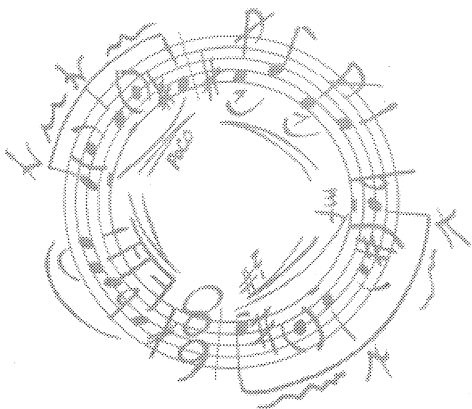
Treppenmusik (staircase music) is the German word used to describe Richard Wagner's *Siegfried Idyll* due to the unusual location of its first performance as a Christmas/birthday present in 1870 for his wife, Cosima.

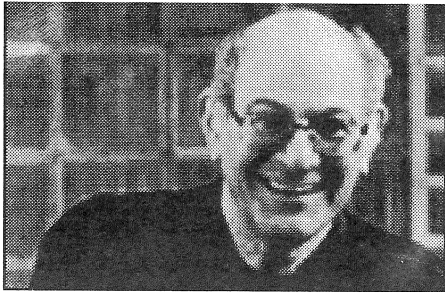
In my composition, however, this title alludes to the paradoxical staircases — ascents and descents to somewhere, to nowhere — and the other strange loop figurations found in the engravings and lithographs of the Dutch graphic artist, Maurits Cornelis Escher (1898-1972).

Symmetries, canonic-like repetitions, metamorphoses, the familiar made fantastic — underlying techniques and principles articulated through his experiments with perspective and tessellation (mosaic patterns), all combine in Escher's work, which also came under the influence of mathematics. Indeed, he seems to have created in his compelling images another sentient world, one with its own impossible celestial mechanics.

As my dear friend, composer Claude Vivier (1948-1983) once wrote: "Time is a geometrically variable space. Different planes exist side-by-side, are intersected and transformed by the marvelous laws of celestial mechanics. Music has brought about the magic of time in human life. For a few brief moments, human beings transgress the divine order of celestial mechanics Thus, humans construct their own machines for traveling through time: music. Ó" (translation of an excerpt from *ÔPour GšdelÔ*, in *Traffics*, Montreal, 1982)

Treppenmusik is my very own time-machine traveling through a world according to Escher.





Mauricio Kagel, composer

Born on December 24, 1931, in Buenos Aires, Mauricio Kagel studied music, as well as literary history and philosophy at the university there. He was art consultant for the *Agrupación Nueva Música* in 1949, and a co-founder of the *Cinemathèque Argentine* in 1950. The first compositions came that year. After working as director of studies at the Chamber Opera as well as répétiteur and conductor at the *Teatro Colón* beginning in 1955, Kagel went to Europe in 1957 and took up residence in Cologne.

Starting in 1958, he participated in the Darmstadt *Ferienkurs für Neue Musik* [Summer Course for New Music], and has been a lecturer there since 1960. In 1964 through to 1965, he was professor of composition at the State University of New York in Buffalo, and in 1967 served as guest lecturer at the *Film-und Fernsehakademie* [Film and Television Academy] of Berlin. In 1968, Kagel became director of the Scandinavian *Kurse für Neue Musik* [Course for New Music] in Göteborg, and from 1969 to 1975 was director of the Cologne *Kurse für Neue Musik* [Course for New Music].

Since 1974, the composer has been professor for the New Music Theater at the *Kölner Musikhochschule* [Cologne Conservatory of Music]. With the "*Kölner Ensemble*" [Cologne Ensemble], which he conducts, Kagel has given lectures and concerts all over the world, including the Middle East, Asia, South America, the United States, and Canada.

Extensive series and program retrospectives of his compositions, films, and radio plays have been held in Berlin (1975, 1985, 1990), Metz (1977), Stuttgart (1977 and 1986), Paris (1978), La Rochelle (1979), Aix-en-Provence (1981), Munich (1984), Amsterdam (1985), Aarau (1986), Zagreb (1987), Los Angeles (1988), London, Frankfurt (1989), Banff, Canada (1990), Caen, as well as The Hague, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and Utrecht (1991), Cologne, Gent, Brussels, and Montreal (1992), Gütersloh (1992 and 1995), Salzburg (1994), Zurich (1995), Vienna (1995), Paris (1996), Amsterdam (1996 and 1997), Viitasaari, Finland (1997), Klavierfestival Ruhr (1997), Weingarten (1997), London (2001), Chemnitz (2001), Berlin (2002), Gütersloh (2002), Aldeburgh/Suffolk (2003), and in Hamburg (2004).

Kagel was composer-in-residence of the *Kölner Philharmonie* [Cologne Philharmonic] in 1989, and received the Erasmus Prize in Amsterdam in 1998, as well as the Ravel Prize in 1999, the Ernst von Siemens Music Prize in 2000, the Italian Music Critics' Prize (for the ballad opera, *Aus Deutschland* in the 1998/99 season), and the Großer Kulturpreis Rheinland [Rhineland Grand Prize for Culture] in 2002.

***Das Konzert* for solo flute, harp, percussion and strings (2001-2002)**

Note Written by Mauricio Kagel

Probably the most exciting moments in a composer's life take place when he is away from his desk, trying to organize ideas and material in his mind for future works. Unlike sitting in front of a page covered with disturbingly empty note systems, during these times, one's imagination knows no bounds.

Possible and impossible variations whirl through your head – invention and the imagination of ideals need pay no heed to the practical real-world considerations of staging a performance. It is precisely in these moments that I slowly begin to sense what needs to be avoided in the future piece and what goals I should set for myself. This process followed the same course during the creation of the *Das Konzert*, a work commissioned by the Kunststiftung NRW (North Rhine-Westfalia Foundation for the Arts).

In contrast to the usual arrangement in a number of movements, I undertook to create a one-movement opus, albeit one with frequent changes of tempo and pitch. I also had no desire to write an apotheosis of solo virtuosity, which is often displayed in instrumental cadenzas.

I felt that two anti-cadenzas of sparse tones would do more justice to the basic mood and resolute expressiveness of the piece. Of course, the finger skills of the flautist had to be given room for expression, and this had to be in dialog with equally skilled partners. The harp, percussion and strings could not take subordinate positions and just perform a simple accompaniment.

And, finally, the architecture of the work had to be based on fundamental tempi, each carried by music of a different character.

You could compare this composition with a bewildering labyrinth: Similar to a wandering observer who discovers again and again that the door to freedom at the end of the passage is nothing more than painted trompe-l'oeil.

The listener will find signposts, musical aerial images simultaneously combining reality and deception and thereby creating the illusion of clarity.

Translated by Ilse Wong



Robert Aitken, flute

Robert (Morris) Aitken, flutist, composer and conductor, was born in Kentville, Nova Scotia on August 28, 1939. He received a Bachelor of Music in Toronto in 1961, and a Masters of Music Composition in Toronto in 1964.

After flute studies with Nicolas Fiore in Toronto from 1955 to 1959, Aitken became principal flute of the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, the youngest principal in that orchestra's history, while studying composition with Barbara Pentland at U.B.C.

From 1960-64, while studying electronic music with Myron Shaeffer and composition with John Weinzwieg at the University of Toronto, he served as second flute of the C.B.C. Symphony Orchestra.

He considers Marcel Moyse, with whom he studied intermittently for 9 years in Vermont and in Europe, as his most significant flute teacher. However, Aitken also studied with Jean Pierre Rampal (Paris, Nice), Severino Gazzeloni (Rome), André Jaunet (Zurich) and Hubert Barwähser (Amsterdam) during his 1964-65 European sojourn on a Canada Council grant.

In 1964 Aitken, with pianist Marion Ross (his wife) and soprano Mary Morrison, formed the Lyric Arts Trio. He served from 1965-70 as co-principal flute of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, but gave up this position to devote himself to solo performance and appearances with the trio and with harpsichordist Greta Kraus. He won prizes at the "Concours international de flûte de Paris" (1971) and the "Concours international de flûte pour la musique contemporaine" (1972) in Royan (France).

In 1970, Aitken founded and directed (until 1972) the 'Music Today' series at the Shaw Festival in Ontario, then in 1971 co-founded with Norma Beecroft 'New Music Concerts', serving thereafter as artistic director. In 1977, he was one of 12 instrumentalists invited by Pierre Boulez to present a solo recital at IRCAM (Paris) playing solo pieces of Takemitsu, Morthensen, Fukushima, Globokar, Sigurbjörnsson, Y. Matsudaira, Holliger and himself.

Aitken taught from 1960 to 1975 at the University of Toronto, and from 1972 to 1982 at the Shownigan Summer School of the Arts (British Columbia). In 1981, he founded 'Music at Shownigan', a 3-week festival devoted to advanced chamber music study.

From 1985 to 1989, he was director of the Advanced Studies in Music program at the Banff School of Fine Arts in Alberta. Aitken has given master classes in many countries including Cuba, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Mexico, Norway, Poland, Sweden and the U.S.A. Since 1988, he has been professor at the Staatliche Hochschule für Musik in Freiburg, Germany.

He has also been very active as a conductor with New Music Concerts

***Cantus to the Memory of Benjamin Britten* for string orchestra**

Arvo Pärt wrote the *Cantus* in 1977, shortly after the death of Benjamin Britten late in 1976. Britten believed very strongly that music played a vital role as a bridge between otherwise insurmountable political differences. He conducted the Western premières of many of Shostakovich's later symphonies and was a major force in promoting performances of younger Soviet and Eastern composers. The *Cantus* was written in recognition of these efforts.

The *Cantus* for string orchestra, is constructed of the simplest of musical materials, a descending A minor scale. Beginning on the highest A of the first violins, it cascades gradually through the entire string section, like a waterfall in slow motion, until it ends on the lowest A of the string basses.

The piece is in the form of a canon, but of a special type; Pärt borrows a device from medieval music known as a "mensuration canon." The theme of the first violins is repeated in canon by the other strings, but as each successive string group enters, it plays the theme twice as slowly, so that when the string basses finally come in, they play the theme once, sixteen times as slowly as the first violins. Throughout the *Cantus* there is the regular tolling of the bell, also pitched in A.

"At the end of the work," Pärt observes, "a cluster of triads is formed – a plateau, a stockade. In our eyes something has been realized, something has been engraved. Something dies, but something is born; it is like a resurrection."

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***Les Idées Fixes*, Rondo for Orchestra (1988-89)**

Note Written by Mauricio Kagel

Using the plural rondos instead of rondo in the subtitle to this work would have been more correct, since the work isn't one rondo, but a series of five rondos, each with a different character. However, my fear that the 's' would inevitably be seen as a printing error, which had to be removed, motivated me to choose the more imprecise singular.

A title and subtitle are often the attempt to find an appropriate shorthand way of conveying the essence of the music and the form chosen for the piece, and it is the nature of music itself that explains why this can never be completely achieved. Fortunately, reading a written description, whether short or even generously long, cannot make the music be heard or even begin to bring to life the silence of the page.

And, at the same time, each rondo is a resounding document of an 'idée fixe', whose recurrence serves almost incidentally to structure the development of the piece. When the formal development of the piece is exposed in such a way, every accidental change, every unassuming repetition, appears as a stone carefully laid along a well thought out path.

The changes the listener follows through the piece serve to heighten his perception. The diverse characteristics and polyphonic structures that can be achieved today with a deliberate linear form like the rondo motivated me to continue multiplying the meandering of refrains and couplets. And, often during the composition, I was active as a chronicler, consulting the silent witnesses of all those transformations I was unable to make use of.

Translated by Ilse Wong

Acknowledgements

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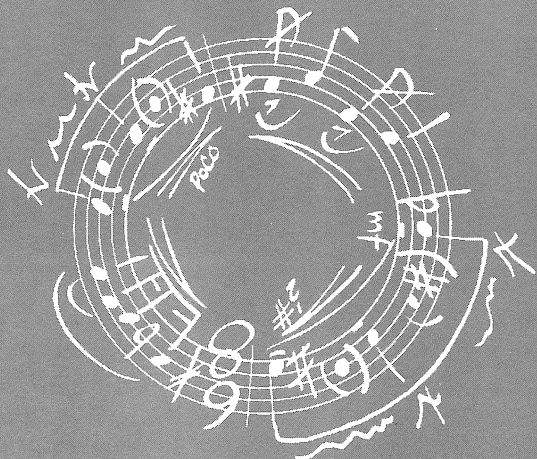
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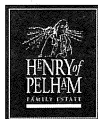
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